

amount of combat power at a critical time. Again, we see the importance of a strong XO and first sergeant, who are responsible for making sure the company is sustained without hindering its unity of effort.

While a mechanized company's numerous vehicles and weapons give its commander many opportunities, they also expose him to the ever-present danger of becoming overwhelmed or tied down by these machines. Soldiers are still the most important resource, and infantry soldiers need hard training.

As a mechanized infantry commander, you must constantly balance the requirements for mounted and dismounted training. Although the small unit tactical focus in mechanized units is on platoons rather than squads, the role of noncommissioned officers here is no less important than it is in light units. In fact, the Bradley adds even more individual and team tasks that sergeants must teach their

soldiers, and requires the commander to manage a multi-dimensional training program. And don't forget—there is just as much of a requirement for good physical conditioning in heavy as in light units.

At first glance, it may appear that the different ends of the infantry spectrum are too far apart, too alien, for an officer to make a successful transition from one end to the other. But they have more important things in common than they have differences: Infantry soldiers are still infantry soldiers, and sound leadership is still sound leadership. Common sense is still at a premium, and NCOs are still the backbone of the company. There are still plenty of foot marches; marksmanship will always be the pre-eminent individual skill of the infantryman; and dismounted infiltration onto key terrain can still be a devastating "ace in the hole."

It is not difficult to cross from light to "mech" if you realize that the warrior spirit is the same in both kinds of units

and if you put forth just a little extra effort.

Meanwhile, for those of you in the Officer Advanced Course, use your time wisely. While the course can be a little slow at times, the small-group tactical instruction gives you an opportunity to absorb a lot of information about mechanized and combined arms operations at company, battalion, and brigade levels.

The biggest obstacle in your way will be the old "light" prejudice that "mech" is a four-letter word. It is better to remember that smart infantry is the best infantry, whether it walks or rolls.

Captain Thomas E. Fish commands Company A, 5th Battalion, 5th Cavalry in Germany. He was formerly a rifle platoon leader and a battalion S-1 in the 7th Infantry Division (Light). He is a 1983 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy. He also wrote "Thinking Light," which appeared in *INFANTRY*'s March-April 1988 issue, pages 8-10.

Lessons on the BIFV

LIEUTENANT JEROME J. BURNS

During a battalion ARTEP at the Hohenfels Training Area in Germany, I had my first real experience as a second lieutenant in the tactical employment of the Bradley infantry fighting vehicle (BIFV). Up to that time, my only experience with it had been what I had learned in the Bradley Commander's Course at Fort Benning and on one training exercise. From the training at Hohenfels, I discovered that, although the BIFV has an incredible amount of firepower and mobility, it is neither indestructible nor all-destroying.

This discovery grew out of some specific lessons that helped me survive longer and accomplish the mission better. Although there is nothing new about

these lessons, they do offer, through one lieutenant's actual experience, a more realistic understanding of the basics of Bradley employment that may be helpful to others who are just coming into Bradley units.

The training at Hohenfels was conducted in three phases—train-up, ARTEPs, and opposing force (OPFOR). During each phase, the units executed four main tactical scenarios—a hasty attack, a deliberate defense, a deliberate night attack, and a hasty defense. The lessons I learned are presented within these four scenarios.

Hasty Attack:

- Never engage a tank while it is scanning in your direction. It will find and

destroy your BIFV long before your BIFV can acquire and engage it with a TOW. A BIFV can destroy a tank only if the tank is preoccupied or looking in another direction, or if the vehicle's dismounted troops get a sneak shot with their Dragons.

- Never skyline a BIFV. Even if the enemy can't engage the vehicle with direct fire, he will determine its location and target it with indirect fire. Therefore, to locate targets from a reverse slope position, you must dismount and observe or send out an observation post team to call back the target information. Once you acquire the targets, move up and engage them, and promptly return to the reverse slope. After your BIFV makes

its first engagement, though, assume that the enemy has located your original position and move to an alternate position in the general vicinity.

- When assaulting mounted from one battle position to another use covered and concealed routes whenever possible; move as rapidly as possible across open areas; and thoroughly scan the next position and the likely enemy locations before moving, even if the position has been secured earlier. The enemy may have reoccupied the position after it was cleared by the scouts or a dismount team.

- In the attack, always move when under direct or indirect fire. Failure to move slows or stalls the momentum of your attack, which gives the enemy time to regroup or react. In addition, it allows the enemy to fix your position and either call indirect fire onto it or maneuver to a position from which he can engage you by direct fire.

- Mobility is vital to the survival of the BIFV. Limited avenues of mobility allow the enemy to predict the locations and actions of the BIFV more accurately and therefore to outmaneuver it or call in indirect fire on it. Some limiting terrain features and obstacles to watch out for are steep ridges, ditches, cliffs, rivers, and thick tree lines. It is important, when planning and executing operations, to develop courses of action that you can take in such situations.

- When you receive direct fire in the attack it is imperative that you react quickly and instinctively, because any delay will certainly prove fatal. Get out of the engagement area, return fire, lay smoke, and seek cover and concealment. Turn the smoke on as soon as the vehicle receives fire.

Deliberate Defense:

- Make sure the BIFV has good cover and concealment. First, if it can't be seen it can't be engaged accurately, if at all. Second, if it is seen it will be protected from both direct and indirect fires. Make sure that the positions are dug deep, and that the dismount element has good overhead cover. There is no room for excuses; it must be done.

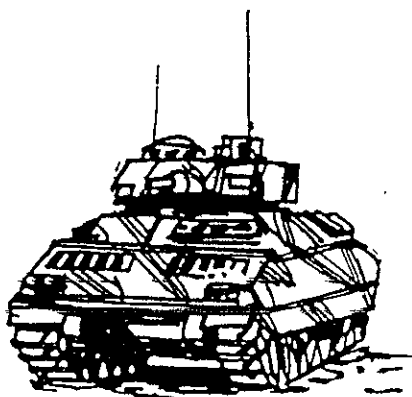
- It is not necessary (or even a good idea) to occupy fighting positions until the enemy has entered the engagement

area. Meanwhile, get the BIFV into a good hide position nearby to prevent the enemy from easily locating it or its fighting position.

- Provide alternate and supplementary positions for the BIFV. A stationary BIFV will be targeted immediately, but one that shoots and moves will confuse the enemy about its location and intentions.

- Emplace NBC equipment, including the M-8 alarm and M-9 paper detectors. These will provide the only warning the infantryman has of chemical agents in his sector, aside from observing a fellow soldier who is showing symptoms of exposure.

- See that you have rear and flank security when in any form of battle position or deliberate defensive position. A



BIFV is extremely vulnerable to dismounted infantry in wooded areas, because the crewmen inside cannot hear when the engine is running or they are wearing their helmets. Dismounted soldiers in a listening or observation post can hear approaching infantry and warn the mounted crewmen.

Deliberate Night Attack:

When moving across an open field, move as quickly as possible and in some kind of attack formation with plenty of dispersion. If you can't take up a good attack formation, then allow the lead vehicle to move out far enough in front to attract enemy fire while the rear vehicles maneuver to provide support.

- As soon as your platoon encounters enemy fire, the soldiers must act on instinct with the rear elements breaking right or left to provide supporting fires and to flank the enemy.

- When a BIFV enters a restrictive

area, the troops must dismount to clear the area while the vehicles provide close-in support. Although a dismount team can be sent out early to clear an area before the mounted attack begins, this is not always a good idea. The enemy can infiltrate back in once the dismount element has cleared, which will leave the dismounted soldiers without any close-in heavy fire support. If the dismount soldiers stay in the vehicle and then dismount to clear a restrictive area, they will have close-in support and can direct their efforts in one area.

Hasty Defense:

- Use obstacles to channel and stop an enemy attack. The emplacement of obstacles must be under the supervision of a knowledgeable person, and while the obstacle is being implaced, someone must provide overwatching fire. Too, the obstacles must be covered with indirect fire and watched.

- Use the dismount element as an LP/OP and an antiarmor strong point. If it is far enough out in front of the mounted teams, it will deprive the enemy of accurate intelligence and force him to deploy early. The dismount element must have a safe way of returning.

The BIFV is an extremely powerful vehicle that is capable of doing a lot of damage to an enemy force, but only if the commander and the crewmen thoroughly understand its vulnerabilities. It is most effective when used in well covered and concealed positions and when working in close coordination with the dismount element.

The vehicle is not good as a main assault vehicle; it must move cautiously and stealthily, hugging woodlines and sneaking up behind targets. It is extremely vulnerable to tanks and should attack only with the utmost caution, agility, and concentration of force.

The BIFV is the infantryman's weapon of the future, and every lesson learned about its capabilities brings the infantry closer to accomplishing its mission.

Lieutenant Jerome J. Burns is assigned to the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 3d Infantry Division, where he has led a BIFV platoon. He is a 1987 ROTC graduate of Texas A & M University.
